



# Howard County Council

George Howard Building  
3430 Courthouse Drive  
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## COUNCILMEMBERS

Courtney Watson, Chairperson  
District 1  
Mary Kay Sigaty, Vice Chairperson  
District 4  
Calvin Ball  
District 2  
Greg Fox  
District 5  
Jennifer Terrasa  
District 3

## HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes (approved, 6/16/08)

Monthly Meeting

June 9, 2008

Chairperson Courtney Watson called the monthly meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. on June 9, 2008, in the C. Vernon Gray Conference Room.

Members present on call to order: Calvin Ball, Greg Fox, and Courtney Watson. Mary Kay Sigaty joined at 8:36 a.m.; Jennifer Terrasa joined at 8:43 a.m.

Mr. Fox reported that the National Association of Counties' annual meeting will take place shortly. He does not plan to attend.

Mr. Ball reminded members that he had e-mailed them a message from Mr. Miles, who reported in May on an advocacy program, concerning follow-up to the May meeting.

Sheila Tolliver, Council Administrator, gave a report of administrative matters, including staff activities underway, end of year budget status, and results of a recent meeting to discuss the transition from a county-run television station to use of Howard Community College and Board of Education services.

Haskell Arnold, County Auditor, reported on activities of the audit office, including a forthcoming look at take-home automobile use and a renewal of the fraud and abuse hotline project.

Ned Tillman, Chairman of the Board on Environmental Sustainability, reported on the progress of the Board. Other Board members present were Mark Southerland, Betsy Singer, Georgia Eacker, and Cathy Hudson. He noted that the Board did a survey to determine the County's current status on environmental sustainability. He also reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the Board and said that the Board held a planning retreat over the past weekend at which they developed a three part program: to develop benchmarks for sustainability, to create a vision, and to develop a plan. From the Commission's recommendations, the Board has developed the following goals for the current year: 1) to monitor the county's progress, 2) to educate, coordinate and develop partnerships, and 3) to provide advocacy and oversight. He said that the Board also will consider a number of topical issues: 1) working on downtown Columbia in the context of achieving sustainable zoning and development), 2) monitoring BGE's maintenance of rights of way, 3) monitoring the condition of the watershed, in cooperation with other groups charged with watershed management, 4) energy, and 5) land preservation.

The members of the Board and the Council discussed ways in which the Board may provide advice to the Council. Members noted that the Board's advice on legislation and on budget would be welcomed. The Board invited the Council to attend or be represented at their meetings, which will be moving to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Tyson Room.

Jack Guaneri, Chairman, Bicycling Advocates of Howard County, spoke to the Council about road conditions that make bicycling hazardous. He encouraged better shoulders and maintenance. He said that the increase in traffic, particularly on roads in the western portion of the county, which is favored for cycling, poses particular hazards to cyclists, and he urged restraint in development to control traffic. As a short-term accommodation of the cyclists, the county will install signs to alert drivers to the presence of cyclists and the need to share space.

The Council reviewed with Ray Wacks, Budget Director, the budget process recently concluded. They expressed the opinion that this year's process was considerably smoother than last year's, and they thanked him for his responsiveness to their questions and his forthrightness in addressing their concerns. Mr. Wacks said that he will provide information in the budget about within-year additions of personnel. Mr. Fox asked that questions that lend themselves to answers in spreadsheet format be so answered. Ms. Watson suggested that the Executive or his staff meet earlier in the process with council members, and Ms. Sigaty reminded that they talked about beginning with the revenue forecast and assumptions. Ms. Terrasa asked for more informative pictures in the capital budget book, including the identification of council districts affected by each project. Mr. Fox asked for better projections in the long-term capital program.

There followed an extended discussion about the proposed budget calendar for 2009. Members were invited to suggest changes to Sheila Tolliver, who will coordinate a final calendar.

Ms. Terrasa asked that there be better detail in the budget sign-in sheets about the projects on which people are testifying.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 a.m.